Varro's Roman Way

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Varro’s Roman Ways: Metastasis and Etymology

Even in an era defined by the extraordinary intellectual range evident in the works of Cicero, M. Terentius Varro’s facility to genre-hop, to wear learning lightly across a massive catalogue of production, makes him stand out. Varro’s *de Lingua Latina* is probably a production of the mid-40s BCE, a time by when Varro had stepped back from the political limelight to build cultural capital by other means. Caesar’s search for a chief fit to lead his projected public library led him to Varro (Suet. *Iul.* 44.2), whose interest in the spoken and written word spanned an entire career. It is not a little ironic that Varro, Caesar’s chosen librarian, now tends to be better known as a resource for word-hunters and linguists, a card-catalogue compendium rather than as a literary, cultural force with complex agenda of his own.

Knowledge of Varro’s literary production comes primarily via the list provided by Jerome, and the figures of seventy or so individual works, spread across something over 600 books, tend to be accepted (for the substantial numbers, see Ritschl 1848). *De Lingua Latina* originally comprised twenty-five books, tackled etymology, grammar and syntax, and in the process explored discourse; it was in part at least dedicated to Varro’s great sparring partner Cicero.[1] Inasmuch as the work’s overall architecture is understood, it seems to have been organized in triads, preceded by an introductory book, so that the reasonably extant books 5-7 (etymology) and 8-10 (grammatical derivation) form two distinct but connected elements. Despite its significant impact on late antique scholarship on (and knowledge of) classical Latin, its transmission history is bleak (Reynolds 1986: 40, 430). Before obtaining a copy of the (lost) Montecassino manuscript, Petrarch, one of his greatest admirers, knew Varro primarily through excerpts by way of (in particular) Augustine. Nevertheless Petrarch confidently identified Varro as one of a trinity of luminaries (the others being Cicero and Vergil) still shining from antiquity.

Cicero, famously, characterized Varro’s power to construct a sense of place that would show Romans their own essential selves writ large within acculturated space (‘Then I commented: “Yes,

that' s the case, Varro. For when we were in our very own city yet still wandering and straying as if strangers, it was your books, so to speak, that led us home, so that we were at last able to recognize who and where we were." ' *Acad*. 1.9). Read in this light, Varro' s work is, in essence, more than simply 'reconnecting history and geography' (Mitchell 2011: 76). The individualizing force of what Varro achieves, for citizen self-fashioning across his body of work, takes on additional significance in the light of geotheorist Jim Ketchum' s analysis of the creative process: 'artistic production allows and even celebrates the artist as the investigator whose experiences embody the act of the investigation' (Ketchum 2011: 141). In *de Lingua Latina*, Varro empowers each successful reader to embody that act anew as they move across a landscape reconfigured by scholarship and syntax.

This chapter takes its inspiration from what I have termed (Spencer 2015) Varro' s tours of Rome (*Ling*. 5.41-54, 145-159), and explores how Varro marries 'time' and 'space' concepts (section 1), the associative quality of Varro' s textual *dérive* (section 2), his embodiment and excavation of consumer culture (section 3), and a worked example of movement through Varro' s scripted city (section 4).

1. The spatial qualities of time

Space and time are always linked, but to take one outstanding yet little-considered example, Varro' s exploration of in-between times (the twilit indeterminacy of dusk: *crepusculum*, *Ling*. 6.5) showcases how human ingenuity applied to the natural environment enriches the utility of the landscape and cosmos, whilst also connecting communities to each other and their surroundings in specific, measurable ways. Since time-immemorial (one might think) day's end was 'sunset', just consult the Twelve Tables. As with sundials versus water-clocks, Rome eventually revised the terminology with a legislative twist; as Varro notes, the hour becomes the 'end' (*tempus supremum*), because that is when the Praetor calls time on the people in the Comitium (*Ling*. 6.5). With this model, time is very literally given shape within space. Observationally, a primitive people experiences sunset; a developed city-state, on the other hand, is alive to the political implications of

what may or must happen, when, and seeks to overwrite twilight by fixing one formal endpoint. Two different systems coexist within the chronotope.

> That word [twilight] they took over that word [twilight] from the Sabines, whence come those named Crepusci, from Amiternum, who had been born at that time of day; similarly the Lucii, first light folk from Reate. 'Twilight' [*crepusculum*] means doubtful [*dubium*]; hence things called doubtful are also 'uncertain' [*creperae*], because at twilight it is doubtful to many whether it is still day or already night.[2]
>
> Varro, *Ling*. 6.5

The ambivalence in the quality of light (one might say, is this sunset, or moonrise?) becomes a *Sabine* attribute in this passage. Sabines embody the significance of embracing complexity when boundary marking, in contrast to the artificial clarity of Roman law. Of course for anyone used to depending on a sundial (that's the Sabines, in this model), *crepusculum* is challenging, and sundials presuppose fixed nodes between which users can meaningfully trace routes enabling reference at key times of day. Varro integrates and normalises the political, cosmic, and conceptual uncertainties in this bundle by presenting a much more straightforward term (*dubium*) as a corollary, yet the doubly obscure etymology still emphasizes 'uncertainty' within the system. What is more, the indeterminacy pops up again with *nox* (*Ling*. 6.6-7). Varro chooses here to ignore non-solar technology for measuring 'night', instead offering a throwback to a time when there was only timeless, unmeasurable night, *nox intempesta*.

Alert readers know that a water-clock might dim the mystery of 'night', and of course there is also the Moon, which produces its own powerful narrative arc crossing country/city boundaries.[3] Night is thus simultaneously arcane and intelligible, and has spatio-temporal qualities. Indeed, night' s transformative power over the world of civil daylight has its own inbuilt stellar limits (*Vesperugo*, *Iubar*, first and last stars, *Ling*. 6.6), setting it apart from *crepusculum*. Varro's first illustrative quote reinforces night's impenetrability; from a speech of Lucretia, in a play (ascribed by the text to

'Cassius', but canonised as Accius) *Brutus*, night's immeasurable qualities enable illicit behaviour that threatens civic cohesion: '*Nocte intempesta nostram deuenit domum*', *Ling*. 6.7 ('In timeless night to our house he came'). This is night's deadly, unknowable and unfixable quality when tyrannous behaviour is licensed, and civic boundaries are thereby threatened with compromise. It is also (Varro indicates, drawing support from Aelius and quoting Plautus, *Asin*. 685) the silent time (*silentium*) when all should be asleep. Thus the nocturnal city, that is to say, an acculturated space within which cosmic and human systems intersect, human authority over the environment is circumscribed, and movement radicalized, is in this case profoundly different to its daylight counterpart.

The speechless quality of the darkened city makes it an 'other' space (Spencer forthcoming a) jostling regularly with daylight civic existence. Another space which overwrites the ordinary qualities of the cityscape is exemplified in Varro on the use of *extemplo* — here-and-now immediacy, another instance of how time and space intersect in key civic and linguistic concepts.[4] Varro derives this from a reimagined *templum*, a space and entity defined by the continuity of what separates it from the rest of the world, and the requirement that only one beginning, or 'entrance', *introitum*, is allowed. Hence *extemplo* (what happens immediately without a hiatus). This develops a celestial sequence taking readers from the Greek-derived encircling vault of the heavens (*polus*, by synecdoche), through *signa* (the iconic constellations) and clustering stars (*sidera*) — in speech, Varro suggests, the two are equivalents, but the semiotic foundations take us into seasonality (*signa* tell us what part of the year we are in; celestial time) and the impact of celestial phenomena on life on earth (*sidera* make things happen, they are manifest in the effects their appearance have on the farming calendar).[5]

The dynamic quality of celestial phenomena and nocturnal celestial migrations re-emerges when (yet again) Varro returns to time-terms later in book 7. A repeat citation (*Ling*. 7.72) of the same line from 'Cassius' (or Accius) recalls Varro's earlier introduction *intempesta nox*. The phrase, Varro says in this context, is from *tempestas* which in turn derives from *tempus*. *Nox intempesta* is thus

(Varro now says) a time when no legitimate action takes place, which readers already learned back in book 6. Yet as in book 6, the quote makes it plain that dramatically speaking, dead of night is exactly when one might expect the liveliest and most radical of action. Nighttime enables 'plot' development, a notion given civic impact when Varro continues with an unascribed quote from Ennius (*Ling*. 7.73). Here 'he' (Ennius) wishes to show that much of the night has passed by citing the movement of the constellation Temo (the 'Wagon'), but the origins of Temo and why this constellation has writ country practice large across the night sky overlooking city and country alike are, apparently, obscure. Not for long: 'in my opinion' (*arbitror*), Varro says, the countryfolk of old first noticed that there were certain 'signs' in the sky which more than the others were distinguishable and that these were observed as being indicators suitable to some use or profit, key among which (the only one Varro mentions) is to mark the right time for cultivation — ultimately, clusters of cultivation coalesce into political, civic units.

This synergy between cosmos, (humans, earth, sky) and *habitus* leads to a discussion of why an uncomplicated relationship between heavens and earth works for the Greeks (Homer was the source of the name 'Wagon', *Ling*. 7.74), but for 'us' Romans, the vista is more complex. Rather than simply indicating a farming-man and his vehicle (the Wagon travels alongside the Ploughman), Roman skies refract a high level of detail (seven starry oxen, wagon-pole, Axis — axle, pole). Meanwhile, the terrestrial ploughmen valorize the magnificence of their techno-beasts (' "*Valentes glebaril*" ', *Ling*. 7.74). The wagon-pole (*temo*) roots itself in *tenere* because it connects (*continere*) the yoke and the *plaustrum* (wagon – a term also used for the composite scenography of the constellation).[6] In this process, Varro says, we find an instance where a complex whole is named for one single part, *ut multa*. Rather, we might say if we step back from the detail here, like Rome itself.

2. A Varronian *dérive*

Unless we imagine a public or convivial performance context for the work (which I do not rule out), Varro's audience is ostensibly singular, that is, Cicero, or the individual implied reader. As Timothy

O'Sullivan has noted (O'Sullivan 2001: 6-8), such a lone figure rarely features in the described reality of Roman urban movement — the citizen is, like Lacan's notion of the self as a function of the reciprocal gaze, a product of collective opinion and subject to daily peer review.[7] This is especially evident in Varro's Capitoline archaeology (*Ling*. 5.41), where the mute *caput* (head) represents a singular embodiment of the fledgling commonwealth, after which the body politic can be formed. This unexpected solitariness buried in and uncovered from the origins of *res publica*, especially when related as part of a tour through Rome's 'iconic emplacements' (Soja 1996: 116), embeds in Rome's foundations aspects of the *flâneur*. Varro's inclusion of the disembodied *caput* manifests the thinking essence of a primal, solitary citywalker whose emblematic presence in the civic foundations of Rome continues to make a difference for what Lefebvre terms 'rhythmanalysis' (Lefebvre and Régulier-Lefebvre 1985), since it co-locates Rome's head with topographic height, itself elevated by the iconic temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, and emphasizing the eddies of movement and meaning between Forum and river which the hill imposes.[8] Each instance of etymological excavation and scrutiny of the Capitoline head must further strengthen the future significance of what Basil Dufallo terms *orature* (a term brought into literary criticism by Joseph Roach, 1996: 11-13) for citizen readers — this model illuminates a primal reciprocity between body, voice and text, feeding the non-literary into the scripted work, and vice versa (Dufallo 2007: 2-3). Dufallo's imaginative and productive deployment of Richard Schechner's influential concept of 'restored behaviour' is also significant here: 'At a basic level, a performer engages in an imaginative extension (and so, in a limited sense, a restoration) of his or her own particular self: "I" becomes "someone else." At an extreme, performance may pretend to the exact duplication of historical situations or events, with the understanding that the performers are doing something in their world by bringing aspects of the past alive' (2007: 3-4 cf. Schechner 1985: 3-150). Roach (1996: 13) acknowledges substantial influence from de Certeau, adding particular relevance to his interest in the authoritative qualities of the pedestrian in a world of ritual and superficial carnival.[9]

In *de Lingua Latina*, what looks like randomness frequently becomes programmatic, and in this

respect it makes sense to read Varro's Roman meanderings as experiments in the *dérive*.[10] The rapid transitions through multifarious scenes and ambiances which characterize the *dérive* are at the heart of many of Varro's topographic sequences, but the methodological quality to this mode is broadly embedded in the cognitive assumptions underpinning *de Lingua Latina*. Take Varro on ratiocination (*Ling*. 6.43): here, the mental, thematic, and topographic leaps illustrate the significance of associative geography for understanding the directional qualities of his thoughtscape. In particular, this etymological sequence offers an opportunity to explore how mental processing becomes part of a wider scheme situating the thinking and practising citizen amidst palimpsestic rusticity even when civic Rome provides the frame.

> 'To consider' [*cogitare*] is said from 'bringing together' [*cogendo*]: the mind brings many things together into one place [*plura in unum cogit*], whence it can choose. Thus from milk that is 'pressed' [*coacto*], 'cheese' [*caseus*] was named; ditto, from men the *contio* [mass-assembly] got its name, ditto for the marriage by mock sale [*coemptio*], and the crossroads [*compitum*].
>
> Varro, *Ling*. 6.43

The connecting thread is terms connected explicitly by an opening in *co*-, here, *cogere* (pressing) acting on milk to generate *caseus* (cheese). But how are readers to move from *co-g*(*it*)*are* to *co-*(*a*)*gere*? Varro's choice of the gerund actually obscures the direct formal similarity which might have more clearly invoked a wordplay from his sequence-opening treatment of *ago* (*Ling*. 6.41). *Caseus* looks out of place, but if readers recall the sequence in full then an earlier term (*coaxeus* [*c*(*o*)*a*(c)*seus*]) shows how *caseus* might makes similarity-based sense.[11] Hence, follow cog(it)are / co(a)gere / coaxare [coassare], reaching *caseus* resulting from *coactus*, itself a slippage from *coaxeus*. But why make readers work so hard to find their way? What has civic assembly to do with cheese, family ties, and way finding nodes?

The sequence's wider potential for signification becomes evident if we draw in other literary

contexts. As Emily Gowers (1993: 17-18, 36-38 and n. 167, 47-48, 112, 265) makes clear, cheese is a deeply acculturated foodstuff, redolent of satire, pastoral, and urbane modes, and especially pungent cheese was unsuitable for urbane company (the kind of shtick on display in Martial 12.32.18). This juxtaposition of cheese with civic movement is about more than the banal possibility of produce markets abutting political and legislative space. Varro was intensely interested in the interface between rustic and urban semiotics and spatial dynamics, as his late work *de Re Rustica* shows. There, he would give himself the lead role in discussing the history and significance of animal husbandry (*Rust*. 2.1-2) in a mock-practical DIY guide constantly looking over its shoulder from fields and villas to urban transformation. Varro's literary career, and the wit he had brought to bear on country life (*Rust*. 1), are central to understanding the satirical underpinning for Varro's *Country Matters*, and Leah Kronenberg (2009: 99-107) goes on to argue for a distinctive Menippean quality for the overall programme.

De Re Rustica couches the task of explaining animal husbandry as a performance piece: Varro says that he accepted the lead role on this topic (*meae partes primae*) not just because his livestock holdings in Italy qualified him particularly well, but because (he implies) he had the acting skills to carry the scene: after all, not every cithara-owner is a cithara-hero ('*non omnes qui habent citharam sunt citharoedi*', *Rust*. 2.1.3). His avatar's bravura performance commences with the coexistence of people and flocks at the heart of the natural order since the very beginning (*Rust*. 2.1.3).

Farming, its outputs and its relationship to self-fashioning, feed into a wider discourse that ripples through traditional expectations of citizenship to be in dialogue with a normative past (*mos maiorum*). This process of understanding the public self within the safely collective context of social memory begins to grate against persona-politics in an era when traditional modes of citizen-practice began to fail. Recalling Cicero's comments (*Acad*. 1.9) on Varro's ability to recharge citizenship with a chronotopic sense of place, Varro's mid-career reintroduction of their city to Romans in his *Antiquitates* (even before *de Lingua Latina*) explored the city as a centripetal force

that drew competing narratives into new relationships within the isovist space peculiar to Rome. *De Re Rustica* (broadly speaking) relocates citizen identity in contexts that decentre the city and interrogate its genealogy in terms of natural history and sympathetic geography with tongue-in-cheek confidence. This model produces new social realities while paying at least lip-service to nature as a reassuringly determinative force (see Demeritt 2002).

In the first phase of existence, *de Re Rustica* recounts, humans lived as part of nature; in the second stage, the pastoral lifestyle emerged. The first wild animals to be domesticated must have been sheep, Varro opines, because they are both useful and placid, and well suited to life with people (*Rust*. 2.1.4-5). What sheep brought to humankind's diet was milk and cheese, and for the body they supplied a wardrobe (wool and leather). So the first phase of differentiation between primitive humans and their descendants is a transition to a virtuous lifestyle of pastoral cultivation defined by a collaborative effort between generous, bountiful sheep, and humankind.

The quirkiness of the moral primacy of this pastoral phase of happy if hierarchical coexistence is outlined when Varro goes on to set out its worthiness (*dignitas*), but also its complicity in deliciously Greek wealth-distinctions and its inseparability from murky politics:

> Of the ancients, the most illustrious were those who were shepherds [*pastori*], as is clear in both Greek and Latin and in the poets of earlier times, who call some men 'rich-in-lambs' [*polyarnas*], some, 'rich-in-sheep' [*polymelos*], others 'rich-in-cattle' [*polybutas*]…So if the flock [*pecus*] had not been held in high esteem [*dignitas*] by the ancients, then the astronomers, when mapping [*describendo*] the sky, would not have named the constellations ['signs', *signa*] for them...And they did not think it sufficient to have one sixth of the twelve zodiac signs named for animals of the herd, until they had added Capricornus to make up a full quarter...And finally, is Italy not named from bullocks [*uitulis*], according to Piso? And who does not agree that the Roman people is sprung from shepherds [*pastoribus*]? Who does not know that Faustulus the fosterer, who brought up Romulus and Remus, was a shepherd

> [*pastorem*]? Will it not show that they themselves were shepherds [*pastores*] too, when it was at the Parilia in particular that they founded [*condidere*] the city?
>
> Varro, *Rust*. 2.1.6, 7, 8, 9

Here, quantification of human identity in terms of livestock informs the parcelling up of the heavens into signs reflecting distinctions produced by animal husbandry. These in turn are in dialogue with the production of distinct experiences of place that soften the boundaries between natural and human geospatial order. Later (*Rust*. 2.5.3), Varro speaking in character will tell Mr Bovine (Vaccius) that Timaeus says the ancient Greeks called bulls *itali*, and that Italy was named (thus, named from Greek, by way of a model echoing the astronomers' mapping of the night sky) for the number and beauty of its cattle and its flourishing calf-breeding. The other story is that Hercules chased a bull there from Sicily, and this fine specimen was called *italus* (*Rust*. 2.5.3-4). *Vitalus* will recur (*Rust*. 2.1.10, 2.11.12) as part of the epistemological framework linking men to animals to regions. Italy is thus an echo of celestial topography and a cartographic riff on a legendary bull.

Pastoralism and the civic unit are intertwined, and when Varro's character 'Cossinius' rounds up the big issues for cheese-making it is not, as readers familiar with *de Lingua Latina* might have expected, *cogere* that produces results; instead, it's the action term *coire* ('to gather round', or 'rally'). In this way he puts connotations of 'public assembly' and 'unification' into the frame in ways that pick up on *de Lingua Latina*, and develops the resonances of bucolic politics for his earlier vision of Italy (*Rust*. 2.11.4. It seems biographically plausible and intertextually irresistible that 'Cossinius' is the L. Cossinius who was a friend of Atticus). When Cossinius observes that the alternative to rennet in cheese-making is the 'milk' from a fig-stem, plus vinegar, the relationships between Rome's topography and the nostalgic idyll of a pastoral past coagulate. (Look 150 years or so ahead, and Martial 13.32 will jokily be characterizing Velabrum smoked cheese as one of 'those' takeaways in his caustic sendup on the tradition of party-favours 13.32). The figgy association attributed by Varro to Cossinius is too good to pass up, leading Varro (in narrative persona) to add the story of the Ruminal in the Forum (*Rust*. 2.11.5).

This direct connection combining figs and milk in the cheese-making process takes us back, we learn, to the commemorative reason for why shepherds first planted a fig-tree near Rumina's shrine, the same place where milk rather than wine and suckling animals forms the sacrifice. What Varro leaves unsaid is the popular link between the Ruminal fig-tree and Romulus (and Remus), a link that he previously flags up when etymologizing the nearby Cermalus in *de Lingua Latina*:

> Because it is at the Suckling Fig [*ficum ruminalem*], and they were discovered [inuenti] there, where the wintery flood of the Tiber had deposited [*detulerat*] them in the basket in which they had been exposed [*expositos*].
>
> Varro*, Ling. 5.54*

The Cermalus' story makes clear that what ultimately makes cheese is also the X marking the spot where cheese-makers (shepherds) transformed Romulus and his twin (if we have all our backstory-elements lined up) from detritus into the figures who would shape Rome. Thus in the beginnings of shepherding sit the *ne plus ultra* instance of a Roman *dérive*. A little later (*Ling*. 5.108) Varro talks readers through primitive shepherds' transition from consumers of uncooked food, nature's spontaneous bounty ('*his quae suapte natura ferebat sine igne*'), to cooks and food-processors, first of all, of crops (foods which they were less able to eat raw, they cooked in a pot: '*quae minus cruda esse poterant decoquebant in olla*'). The last in the list of non-animal foods seems (although the text is problematic) to be the Athenians' sacred olive (and their tutelary founder Athena). If this is correct, it nicely parallels the Ruminal fig tree (ditto, Romulus).

This analysis delivers a number of signals useful for the present chapter. First, by drawing the suggested group of texts together readers are able to gain a richly developed sense of the variety of habitual and authorial perspectives on Rome's neighbourhoods that multiple personae can produce. To an extent, this follows the model of cartographies of influences set out by Guy Debord in 1958. It also draws on Debord's emphatic decoupling of experiential versus physical distance.

Second, this analysis produces a sense of mild displacement (perhaps intelligible as artisans exceptionalism) which, if the mashup of political, rustic, urban, legendary, economic, homely, foreign and so forth is embraced, enables a low-key process of defamiliarization. With this collection of texts in play, core urban sites and spaces are reinvented not simply as (formerly) rustic, or by way of nostalgic country-markup (tactics familiar from an array of authored works of the late Republic), but as actively engaged in food-production. this is not just, or not simply, a consumer cityscape.

3. Consuming Rome

Pastoral pressure (emblematized in cheese-making) expresses Rome out of disparate plots, peoples, and places. Making cheese is in its essence a process demonstrating foresight; providence; careful; practical preparation; and organized, co-operative labour rippling beneath the cityscape. It shows humankind remaining in harmony with the natural world, and prefigures the development of civilization, whilst as a consumer product it emblematizes specific transactional and infrastructural convergences between city and country. It offers, too, a glimpse of the wily, canny character of the well-salted rustic storehouse and locates that model of space at the heart of Rome.

Making cheese, like salting meat, would seem to have made it an ideal subject for Cato’s agricultural DIY guide, but unlike salting meat, it barely features. The exceptional, slightly throw-away reference is Cato, *Agr*. 75-6 (cheese as ingredient; cf. Plaut. *Poen*. 365-7). We have to look to Vergil (e.g. *G*. 3.394-406; cf. *Ecl*. 1.33-35) to find something comparable. Instead of Cato speaking for himself, it is left to Varro’s dedicatee Cicero, in his conjuration of Cato as protagonist for his own work *On Old Age*, to make the connection between traditional ideals of citizenship and cheese-making. In conversation with P. Scipio Africanus Minor and his friend and contemporary C. Laelius, Cicero’s Cato says: ‘“In my opinion, it would be hard to imagine any life happier than that of the farmer”’ (Cic. *Sen*. 56, 70). He then goes on to characterize the material delights of the farmer as constituting the consumer goods that fill his storehouse. The results of his careful planning and effort are surplus provisions (including cheese), which finally, metaphorically, come to represent the

maturing process of the human lifespan. In terms of characterization, this dialogue (set c. 150 BCE) makes Cato (234-159 BCE) a very old man, with Scipio (c. 185-129 BCE) in his prime. The composition-context is rather different, with a likely completion in summer 44 BCE, setting it immediately in dialogue with Varro's work on Latin.

Rome, a city always looking over its shoulder to the farmland beyond and a pastoral backstory, is also a consumer capital, and needs to eat. It is surely not coincidental that when the topography of *de Lingua Latina*'s second Roman tour first becomes intelligibly Roman is when it reaches the produce market: this Forum (etymologically, a 'carry-place') Holitorium (somewhere associated with food crops that require processing), initially just a generic topographic descriptor, is redefined as Roman when Varro tells readers that it was formerly known as the old Macellum (see Spencer 2015: 106), picturesquely full of (*copia*) vegetables (*Ling*. 5.146). Thus once readers have begun to come at Rome from perspectives other than those foregrounded in the first encounter that Varro offers (that is, religious, and with a focus on human intervention, not assimilation into, the landscape of seven hills), questions of processing and consumption take on special significance.

Once readers recognize Rome as the cityscape contextualizing this Forum Holitorium, the (textually) immediately preceding Forum Bouarium starts to look different. The etymological associations for the Forum Bouarium are beefy, but Varro's interest in processed meats is significant context for the consumer politics of urban retail in this zone, and that means thinking especially about pigs. Porkers were amongst the most vividly fleshed out inhabitants on Cato's farm — as a Porcius, only what would one expect — and of course one of Cicero's signature jokes was the pun on Verres (the boar) that he used to merciless effect in his prosecution speech (Corbeill 1996: 57-58, 78-79 treats this and the wider issues to an extensive and amusing examination). A pun on *uerres* (second person future active indicative of *uerro*, to sweep, scour out, drag off or conceal) might also have been in play. That Varro enjoyed these name-games is evident from his own bestiary of characters in *de Re Rustica*, and Kronenberg talks up this kind of humour in Varro's farm-book (2009: 81 n. 18; Spencer 2010: 70-81). Punning on names is clearly one of Varro's figurative modes; compare Cato

and Catulus as puppyish names reflecting on the keen olfactory discrimination of the young dog (*catulus*), who grows up to be a vocal guardian and tracker (*canis* from *cano*; *Ling*. 5.99; cf. *Ling*. 9.74). *De Lingua Latina* 7.103-104 develops the trope (through some colourful quotations) in terms of how animal noises pour out of humans. In the context of sites explicitly deriving their names from animal sounds (M/Booooarium), all users end up transformed to some extent.

Early in *de Lingua Latina* 5, Cato's piggy economics is brought into focus in a short but significant topographic passage:

> 'Ploughed' and 'ploughed plots' (*aruus*; *arationes*) are from 'ploughing' (*arando*); from this, what the ploughshare (*aratri uomer*) has removed (*sustulit*) is a 'furrow' (*sulcus*); where that earth is thrown, that is, thrown forth (*proiecta*), is a 'ridgeback' (*porca*).
> Varro, *Ling*. 5.39

The preceding context for this passage connected fire and sacrifice with the agricultural harvest (*ardor*, *ara*, *area* — *Ling*. 5.38). By contrast, pigs are undisciplined rooters, but this kind of ad hoc tactic also has a place in foundation stories, and ploughing is what kicks things off literally and figuratively for towns once there is a rustic episteme up and running.[12] By the time Varro gets to livestock (*Ling*. 5.95-99) the herd is crucial (farm beasts, *pecora*); its businesslike qualities underpin how land is measured, movement controlled, and the machinery of the state finances policed (it's all about the feet, *pedes*, *Ling*. 5.95, but farm animals play a part too in cultivating divine favour, *Ling* 5.98). *Sus* drops into the frame at *Ling*. 5.96 (boars not until *Ling*. 5.101), where pigs, cows, bulls, and sheep are all part of a natural language gang. If this seems to be taking us far from urban Rome, readers only need to recall that Varro's etymology of the Forum Bouarium — whereby Greeks and Latins shared a common ear for pinning a sound (here, the lowing of cattle, elsewhere, *Ling*. 5.53, the Baalatine calls of early flocks) into language, with the famous (though unmentioned by Varro) sculpture of a bull (see Ov. *Fast*. 6.477-478; Plin. *HN* 34.10) giving singular visual, artistic reality and a species of controlled energy to what was once a site of intersection between the rustic and the

urban, the natural and the managed (Spencer, forthcoming, b, discusses).

Amongst the livestock Varro then reintroduces the pig, *porcus* (*Ling*. 5.97). This *porcus* ties Latin to Sabine (recalling the legendary and ultimately productive friction between Romulus' city and previous settlements, or put another way, between Varro's two fatherlands) via the 'Sabine' term *aprunus*, and to Greek (pig-words 'from the Athenian *libri sacrorum*'). The rustic world of down-home Latin animal husbandry can eventually model an imperializing imaginary, a Latin bestiary where panthers, lions, tigers, bears, camels, and the cameleopard, jostle with more familiar creatures (*Ling*. 5.100). Boars, deer, stags, hares and fleet of foot foxes all join the parade, *Ling*. 5.101). It's not long, however, before Varro has readers back on the farm, in the pigsty.

Specifically, we're in Varro's manufactory ('*Quae manu facta sunt dicam…*', *Ling*. 5.105), and he is working us through the technology of food and products ('*De uictu antiquissima…*', *Ling*. 5.105) in what promises to be diachronic fashion. Having made his way through grain, dairy, and vegetables, he reaches meats. Pork is the paradigm, and he conjures up a mouthwatering vision of the roast gradually giving up its juices over the fire (*Ling*. 5.110). One can also boil a joint in its own liquor (*Ling*. 5.109), or, if one wanted to indulge in word play, the rule of thumb (*ius*) for getting the most flavour from the boiled meat is to boil it according to its own rights (*ius*), in its own juices (*ius*). Like sheep, pigs have a primordial significance: Varro observes that the pig was the first of the domestic herd (*pecus*): the animals that serve masters by succumbing to the knife and lingering long in the salt. Back-rashers (*te*[*r*]*gus*) make a tasty cloak for the pig ('*…ab eo quod eo tegitur*', *Ling*. 5.110), whilst it trots around on its hams (*perna — pes*, really!); the everyday chop (linking the otherwise obscure *sueris* with *sueo*, to be accustomed),[13] and the ribs (*offula*, a diminutive of piglet; see *Rust*. 2.4.11).

From pork to more general chopped meat product (*insicia*, *Ling*. 5.110), named of course, from the meat having been chopped up (*inseco*). It seems self-evident, but Varro adds to the mix: it's just like in the Song of the Salii where <*prosicium*> has delivered 'slicings' (*prosectum*) when offering

the entrails is in question.[14] This interjection of urban martial ritual and its archaic text adds an unexpected venerability and significance to the processing of meat, glossing what follows, Varro's platter of salumi: three kinds of sausage (*Ling*. 5.111). On the alert after the Salian chant, first served is the Lucanian (or, the joke might be, the Crassus — crassundia): a fatty, dense one, getting its topographical tag as a soldier's delight ('*Quod fartum intestinum <e> crassundiis, Lucan<ic>am dicunt*', 'The fatty, densely stuffed intestine they called a Lucanian'. OLD s.v. *crassundia*). Similarly, the Faliscan Belly was a military coinage (from Falerii);[15] a one-way sausage, no through route (the Fundolus), was known also to the Greeks as a blind alley. The Farcimina, perhaps a finely diced, and (if it's like the 'Hilla' used in sacrifices) definitely slender sausage, is distinguished by its prominent 'head' ('*ut in capite apex, apexabo dicta*', *Ling*. 5.111). Number three, by contrast to the other two (chunky and skinny), is long.[16] If the connection between *satura* and a platter of salmagundi holds, then this cut-and-shut menu might be both literary critical excursus and a sideways glance at yet one more way in which the apparently disparate and incoherent is what gives Rome its vigour, and distinctive flavour — not unlike Martial's wry characterization of the distinctive quality of Velabrum-smoked cheese (on the commercial activities of the Velabrum, e.g. Plaut. *Capt*. 489, *Cur*. 483).

The processes of butchery transform animals into meat: the butcher chooses where to cut and how to reconfigure. Varro's close reading of processed meats emphasizes spatial markup, and his interest in how blending animal flesh produces something savoury and desirable gains further weight when read in terms of Fauconnier's theory of 'blending'. Blending, in Fauconnier's system, is what happens when cognitive models are brought together in the same or connected mental spaces (the 'conceptual integration network'); the impact of this analytical metaphor on the mental spaces produced is striking (Fauconnier 1994; Fauconnier and Turner 1998). Where a significant number of blending operations are triggered (as in this case, with Varro's complex evocation of consumption, agriculture, commerce, urbanism, historicity, and aesthetics) the interpretive strategies brought to bear will inevitably be in a different configuration for each reader, set in motion in different sequences, and will comprise completion and filling in of gaps in tune with

individual interests in or requirements for elaboration.

4. Moving through Rome

My case-study for what it feels like to move through Varro's scripted Rome comes from his second tour. This tour commences at *Ling*. 5.141, but only retrospectively, as its 'iconic emplacements' come into focus, is Rome explicitly realized. Instead of confronting readers with Rome's quiddity, Varro opens a vista on the camp-fires of (Rome's) early locals: herdsmen and exiles. Here, as if from empty space, buildings (*aedificia*) rise up around hearths and are themselves embraced within the walls that encircle a town (*Ling*. 5.141). Buildings (plural) imply a developing collectivity and a community-fashioning impetus. Once gathered together, explaining urban space means qualifying its limits: the necessary unifying wall (*murus*, *munus*) rises as a city-defence, a ramparted, fortified urban wall (*moenia*). As I have argued (Spencer, 2015: 102), this produces semantic and associative links between people, fortifications, security, home, defence and urbanization. Once one has a boundary, one inscribes difference between inside and outside space.

Tracing one's way through this landscape creates freshly authored routes with every trip, depending on the memory lode tapped, and taking account of the stickiness of different etymologies on different occasions. Varro's development of one set of these multi-layered stories speaks to native citizens and visitors as individuals, and as part of shifting groups with developing patterns of allegiance. In Varro's landscape, defining territory (*territorium*) means moving repetitively in space (*locus*), and this draws 'ways' (*uiae*) into the mix: they facilitate and are generated by 'natural' routes, repetitively followed or worn down by wagons (*Ling*. 5.21, 22; see Spencer 2015: 104). In this respect, locating 'thinking' as a process that exists in 'the relationship of territory and the earth' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 85) matches mundane reality with philosophical capital in a way that makes sense of Cicero's characterization of Varro, quoted above. *Via*, in this model, is a species of *terminus* (and boundaries are the sites of most frequentative traffic, *Ling*. 5.22, cf. *Ling*. 5.8, 5.145). In turn, the *terminus* becomes a point of convergence of figurative

and literal space.

When Varro directs readers on from the Capitoline Hill, the Lautumiae and Rome's site of incarceration (where once, in the monarchical era, there were stone-quarries, *Ling*. 5.151), the extant text (*Ling*. 5.152) moves readers to the Lauretum (that is, to the Aventine). The half hour or so that one might imagine to separate Capitoline from Aventine for a strolling subject is reconfigured as 'thin space' (in space syntax terms, space which fails to delay by way of meaningful encounters or landmarks, a space meagrely engaging in conversation with its users; see Hillier and Tzortzi 2006). This juxtaposition of the hills overwrites but (for through-readers does not erase) the Velabrum, a site of intense interest in the previous itinerary (*Ling*. 5.43). The manuscript (F) starts '*in eo*' which seems to be a non sequitur (following directly after Varro's Syracusan stone-quarry/Carcer story), but setting that issue aside, what the text does is to effect a spatio-temporal collapse, guiding readers directly from a hill (Capitoline), stone (Syracuse's quarry prisons, *latomiae*, whence Rome's translation *lautumia*, *Ling*. 5.151), and politics (King Tullius' gaol), to another hill (the Aventine), trees (the eponymous laurel grove), and politics (a memorial of King Tatius' political death). In real time and physical space this means pushing one's way across the hubbub of the Forum valley, with its courts and basilicas, shops and beggars, sites of religious observance and primary east-west axis) perhaps taking the Vicus Tuscus south, out into the smells, bustle, and commercial soundscape of the Velabrum; it means bypassing the Ara Maxima, and ignoring the Circus Maximus and the kinds of quirky site that star in other segments of the tour, no upward gaze delays the purposeful movement required to cover the ground as fast as possible, so the Aventine's man-made challenges to the skyline are also ignored. The quality of rapidity of movement between sites of meaning that characterizes the *dérive* is especially interesting in terms of this particular enforced transition.

A key point of connection between the two hills in this phase of the tour is the place of human intervention in a productive landscape. Quarries are where stone is cut from, so, they have intrinsic and prospective constructive force; this particular Capitoline 'Quarry', the Gaol, was an

underground place from which it was by design hard to get out (underground prisons play on the correlation between imprisonment, loss of citizen visibility and rights, and a kind of, or real, death). The corollary is that as a gaol, human lives are 'buried' there (rather than quarried out) to produce a better-constituted city. Reading that Capitoline site through that filter and following Varro's lead means that readers are next of all directly transported to another kind of 'burial' site when the tour shifts to the Lauretum. The Lauretum is first defined as the burial place (*sepultus*) of King Tatius (killed by the Laurentines, *Ling*. 5.152). This explanation is then destabilized with an alternative: instead the site was perhaps named for a laurel grove, partly at least cut down ('*excisa*') and the site of a new *uicus* ('neighbourhood' or 'block'). With that, a reader's imaginative gaze is recalled to the north, to the Quarry, so that both sites become places from which natural materials are cut for profit and for civic purposes.

When Varro encourages readers to forget the Velabrum, to overlook the Capitoline and Palatine slopes and the Circus Maximus, he cuts across expectations, but the tearing down of guiding narratives that underpins Situationist psychogeography is not, I suggest, his primary agenda. What Varro produces, instead, is a challenging refinement of 'escorted movement' (Östenberg 2015). Later, Varro perhaps sardonically fashions himself (via the character of Q. Lucienus, *Rust*. 2.5.1) as 'ποιμένα λαῶν' ('shepherd of the people'); pigs, sheep, cows, all are subject to his controlling narrative. In the context of the tour, Varro has taken his audience back across previously trodden political and commercial space as if by way of a flyover, and in the process, asserted his ability to fast-forward, in effect filtering civic space in order to leave just a rustic, natural overlay. In this way, rather than a non sequitur, the juxtaposition emphasizes a textuality and a controlling power over space and time available to the knowledgeable, and enables two divergent experiences to develop. One outcome allows the reader to interpolate their understanding of the sights of the cutscene, and take more time over the transition (perhaps mentally setting Varro's previous tour scrolling), the other assumes that once experienced, the elision of time and space inevitably shifts every subsequent encounter with the reality. After this sequence in Varro, the Aventine must be experienced as closer to the Capitoline than physical experience of distance allows.

Conclusions

Despite its incomplete survival, *de Lingua Latina* idiosyncratically and engagingly marks up the physical landscapes of Rome and their complex dialogue with the passage of time, and it illuminates how discourse produces a sense of belonging or alienation for those moving through urban space during an era of intense civic self-scrutiny. Varro's indeterminate 'night' and the 'otherspace' significance of *crepusculum* highlight how patterns emerge when human consciousness operates on even the most trackless spaces. This motif is especially evident in the cognitive processes required to manifest key sites in order to employ a tour. Like so many of Varro's once natural, 'now' urban sites, the Lauretum, like the Lautumiae, is most vital in its status as afterimage. It can only exist as a metropolitan landmark once the unique natural identifier that supposedly made it a landmark is gone without a trace, its ghostly image recoverable only by the expert tour-guide. The lack of integrity in the extant text of *de Lingua Latina* has for the most part encouraged strip-mining or work on the extreme close-up rather than sympathetic engagement with what the big project might have been. In the context of this volume, Varro's emphasis on urban space (and its rustic, cosmic frames) when mapping language is particularly interesting, and the associative approach that characterizes the structure of the extant text lends itself especially well to analyses rooted in theories of movement through space, and its construction.

Work by theorists such as Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau, and the urban labyrinths of the Situationist International, have their genesis in very different societal contexts, yet the violent upheavals transforming Rome culturally and politically during Varro's lifetime offer relevant points of intersection. Moreover, the semantic and visceral qualities evoked by key consumer products which are simultaneously manifestations of civilization and echoes of pre-urban communities ensure that a stroll through Rome keeps farmyard sights, sounds, and dynamics close to the surface of the late Republican cityscape.

Varro's etymologies relating to signs of chronology make especially clear how closely he associates the measurement of time with civic space and ritual. All of the routes through Varro's Rome feature or suppress time, whether historical, experiential, or phenomenological. Social geography and developments in mapping have, as this chapter draws out, produced new ways of articulating space syntax, and recognizing the power of individual as well as collective narratives in determining the experience of reality. Conversely, the accretion of sufficient stories at particular locales creates eddy-points, modulates real-world movement patterns, and effects perceptible change in the fabric of a community.

Read in this way, Varro's excavation of the syntax of produced space emphasizes the power of the sign and indicates models within which meanings can be channelled. Building on Deleuze's reading of Foucault (1999: 61), and taking account of Mitchell (2011), those who can pick a meaningful route through the strata of Rome's genealogical topography are less likely to trip up. The coherence of his application of linguistic and etymological techniques produced a deeply acculturated landscape, and has unusual potential to empower his less scholarly readers to make their own informed critiques of the city of Rome, but also to shape it for their own purposes. *De Lingua Latina* illustrates the plasticity of Rome's palimpsestic qualities, and encourages its audience(s) to experience the city's iconic afterimages as part of a dynamic system.

In the wake of Varro, the rich verse aesthetics of, for instance, Vergil's *Georgics*, or Manilius' *Astronomica*, but also more (seemingly) workaday technical writing such as Vitruvius' *de Architectura* (McEwen 2003; Spencer forthcoming a), were beginning to make powerful cultural capital for new modes of authorial imperialism. Movement through Rome, in the immediate aftermath of Varro's ways and means, floods the polyglot, cosmopolitan cityscape with competing, jarring, alienating and confusing eruptions of meaning but leaves the imposition of order to the individual to impose. Nevertheless, subtle and overt ideological values, made available in the Roman itineraries of *de Lingua Latina*, produce rhetorics of movement that prefigure the production of Augustan space. Once read, even Varro's more apparently freewheeling Roman ways begin to

channel points of confluence with individual and social memory; ultimately, narrative developments hinted at in Varro' s Roman etymologies nod to the possibility of totalizing approaches. Varro conceived as the populace as a polyphonous and unruly storytelling machine, but one whose meandering appropriations self-regulate when viewed at macrocosmic level (*Ling*. 9.1-5, 6, 18; see Spencer forthcoming b). The personal narrativization of urban drift that his antiquarianism and scholarship enabled for the individual strolling subject was also, of course, instrumental in facilitating overt authorization of particular perspectives. In the last decade of the first century BCE, the chaotic plurality of competing interventions in urban planning and opportunities for monumental commemoration previously available widely within a competitive oligarchy, were coming narrowly into the domain of Rome's first emperor, Augustus.

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[1] Unless otherwise specified, the text of *de Lingua Latina* quoted is Kent's Loeb edition, but with my own translations.

[2] With regard to accepting the emendations, including taking Mueller's *Reatino* instead of *reatione* or *creatione*, I turn to R. 1991. *A Lexicon of Ancient Latin Etymologies*. ARCA 25. Leeds: Francis Cairns *s.v. Lucius, ii*, where the Etruscan tie-in is part of the belated tradition at least.

[3] Varro uses quotes from Pacuvius, Platuus, and Ennius (all the big guns) to nuance the Greco-Latinity of the evening- and morning-stars. People stay up through the night, they experience these stars denotatively, yet 'night' remains problematic. If *nox* is from *nocet* ('it harms', *Ling*. 6.6) then Latin's night is genuinely disturbing in its sunlessness, but Varro's throwaway Greek homophone alternative, introduced '*nisi quod*...' fails to dig into what the link might signify.

[4] Ennius illustrates *extemplo* as an indicator of immediacy, Varro, *Ling*. 7.13; the material develops across *Ling*. 7.14-16.

[5] Varro's illustrative quotes come from Accius.

[6] Varro, *Ling*. 7.75.

[7] For this in Lacan, e.g. Žižek 1991: 125 — the Self is always imperfect or incomplete in the subject's visual field, and depends on others in order to operate intact as part of the subject's perception of reality. We never see ourselves fully, even (or especially) in reflection.

[8] This is in tune with the models developed by de Certeau, M. 1984 [1974]. *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. S. Rendall. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 97-102, xxii

[9] On walking and *flânerie*, e.g. O'Sullivan, T. 2011. *Walking in Roman Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 6 (a brief allusion, drawing in Walter Benjamin); cf. Larmour, D. H. J. and Spencer, D. 2007. '"*Roma, Recepta*": A Topography of the Imagination', in D. H. J. Larmour and D. Spencer (eds.) 2007. *The Sites of Rome: Time, Space, Memory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 17-18.

[10] http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/definitions.html [checked 19-09-2015).

[11] Varro, *Ling*. 5.108. This is Antonius Augustinus' emendation (with B) for *coxeus*. *OLD* has entry for

coaxo, *-are*, but only cites Vitruvius 2.8.17; 7.1.5.

[12] *OLD s.v. porca* 1, *-ae*, *porca* 2, *-ae* (see Cato's sow, *Agr.* 134; Vergil's boar, *Aen*. 8.641), *porcus* (more of a hog or pig, even a glutton). Cf. Varro, *Ling*. 5.143-144.

[13] Maltby 1991 *s.v. perna -ae* notes Varro as the originator (as far as we know) for the derivation, ditto for *sueris -is*. *OLD s.v. perna* 1 makes clear how unusual the term was; *s.v. sueris* for the sense 'chop' (cut of meat), with a Plautine fragment (Fest. 330 M) the only other instance.

[14] The insertion of *prosicium* makes sense of the verbal echo Varro is clearly introducing in the '*insicia...insecta*' clause which precedes (*Ling*. 5.110).

[15] *OLD s.v. faliscus, -a, -um* 2a. *Praesepes falisca* (*OLD* 2b) is a feeding trough (Cato, *Agr*. 4.1, 14.1); the reverb is rich.

[16] Cf. Isid. *Etym*. 2.20.28. A lacuna in Varro seems to require an additional sausage type, potentially linked to *fartum*. *Farticulum*, adopted by Kent, is perhaps connected to *farticula* (for which only exists Titinius, *Com*. 90).